

# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**



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## CONTENTS

SOUTH OF THE BORDER .....	64
BIRDING AREAS OF IOWA .....	64-68
FALL MEETING .....	69-70
PRESIDENT'S LETTER .....	71
BIRDS ON STAMPS .....	72-73
GENERAL NOTES .....	77
OBITUARY .....	78
BOOK REVIEWS .....	78-82
QUIZ .....	82
NOTICES .....	83-84

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## South of the Border

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LAMONT, IOWA

Our destination was Tikal, Guatemala. Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa, has what they call a winter term during the month of January. Our son, Richard De Long, is a professor in the science department of the college and was taking a class in anthropology of Middle America for a month to study the archaeological ruins of Mexico and Guatemala. We left Lamoni on December 30, 1972, for Brownsville, Texas, where we spent New Year's Day in the Fort Brown Motor Hotel.

The college chateau wagon carried eleven students, followed by two college station wagons with five students each, and our 1973 Ford Galaxie 500 brought up the rear with my husband Wallace driving and Ruth Zollars from Shenandoah, Iowa, accompanying us. We also transported some of the excess baggage.

On New Year's Day while Richard and Wallace were watching the football games on TV, Ruth and I went bird watching even though there was a misty rain most of the day. I was happy to add five new birds to my life list, the most interesting being the Green Jay and the Kisadee Flycatcher.

The next day, January 2, we crossed the border and were in Mexico. Our trip became a study not only in anthropology and archaeology, but also in ornithology, geography, and even sociology. From Ciudad Victoria to Tampico to Vera Cruz in Mexico, Cattle Egrets, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, and both Little Blue and Great Blue Herons were abundant wherever there were pools of water. The Cattle Egrets were often seen perched on the backs of cattle that were lying on the grass.

Mexico is a land of vultures. The Turkey Vulture can be recognized in the air as it soars in wide circles, holding its wings in a broad V and tilting from side to side. The Black Vulture has a short tail and a horizontal wing position with white wing patches near the wing tips.

On January 3 we stayed at Vera Cruz at the beautiful Hotel Mocambo, a fabulous old seashore hotel, three stories high with many steps going down, down to a private beach on the Gulf of Mexico. The Great-tailed Grackles were up early in the morning singing. I must say they have a beautiful song, not at all like the Common Grackle in our state.

On January 5 we headed for Palenque, Mexico, the first archaeological site we were to visit. A paved road takes one directly to the ancient Maya ruins. Palenque ruins have been called the most beautiful, dramatic, and satisfying of the Maya masterpieces. This magnificent Maya archaeological complex is different, in a way, from the other Maya ruins in that it was sort of a ceremonial center, a Holy city of priests and pilgrims, and not just another Maya town. The ruins date from before Christ, thrived somewhere around 600 A.D., and then were abandoned and the jungle took over and covered it up.

Palenque is in a tropical jungle. Our thatched roof bungalow was hidden among the jungle trees and we needed a flashlight to go down the path through the jungle to reach it. Ruth and I found the bird life here fabulous. We were delighted to see so many of our warblers wintering here such as Redstarts, the Magnolia, Black-and-white, Nashville, and the Yellow Warbler. While watching a Wood Thrush sitting so quietly on a log, we were surprised to see a Hooded Warbler drop down from the thick foliage and circle around the Wood Thrush. We added this one to our life list of warblers. A Gray Catbird was giving its familiar catlike call and many Empidonax flycatchers were wintering here. We saw the Great Crested Flycatcher



among them. We also identified many birds that can be seen only south of the border. We were sorry to leave Palenque after being here two days, but our itinerary showed we must be on our way to the peninsula of Yucatan, Mexico.

In crossing the Yucatan Peninsula there was another bird that I saw that was new to me. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were perched on telephone wires. My friend, Betty Walters, a fellow teacher when I taught at Shenandoah, Iowa, used to tell me about seeing these birds perched on telephone wires in Oklahoma when she crossed the state on her way to Denton, Texas, where she attended summer school. I have crossed the state of Oklahoma and Texas, but it has always been in the winter when these flycatchers are on their wintering grounds in Mexico or Central America; therefore it was with much joy that I was able to add this bird to my list of birds for the United States, even though I had to see it in Mexico.

At Campeche on the Gulf of Mexico we stayed at Hotel Baluretes. Our hotel room had a door that opened out on a balcony, where I watched Laughing Gulls, Royal Terns, and Brown Pelicans flying low over the Gulf. Spotted Sandpipers were busily flying back and forth along the beach.

Outside our hotel at Merida, Yucatan, there were sidewalk cafes and many tall trees. Ruth and I were surprised to see our Orchard Oriole wintering here. While we were watching a Dusky-tailed Tanager in these trees, several birds with blue plumage flew into the same tree. In the book *Birds of North America* by Robbins on page 288, there is a picture of the Blue-gray Tanager introduced into Miami, Florida, from tropical America. I had often looked at this picture but never dreamed that someday I would see one. But here he was, not one but many.

It was hot and humid the day we visited the ruins of Uxmal near Merida. Natives take a siesta during the afternoon, but we North Americans didn't have time for a siesta but were climbing the steps of all the pyramids and palaces. Ruth and I decided to look for birds. We played the Mexican bird calls on my tape recorder and were having good results calling the birds from the thick tangles of the scrubby jungle growth. Beautiful orioles, those found only south of the border in brilliant plumage of orange and black, would make their appearance at the edge of the trees and shrubs where we were standing. One was called the Orange Oriole.

Before we left Lamoni, Ruth had told Wallace that there was one bird she did so much want to see and that was a motmot. Because of the heat, we had been sitting in the car while the others were climbing pyramids. I decided to play my tape recorder again to see what I might get to respond. I went around a building but stopped quickly. There on a post sat a large bird with a long tail that was racket-tipped at the end. It made me think of a pendulum on a grandfather's clock. His feathers had much turquoise and the posterior underparts were cinnamon. I ran to the car and called Ruth. She quickly came around that building and exclaimed, "A Turquoise-browed Motmot!"

The next day we visited the ruins of Chicken Itza, 75 miles east of Merida. National Geographic magazines have had pictures and articles of these famous ruins such as the Temple of the Warriors; the Pyramid of Kukulcan; the Caracol or Observatory; and the Ball court. There was one place I did want to see and that was the Cenote or Sacred Well, but in order to get to this place we had to walk a quarter of a mile down a lane that was bordered on both sides with scrubby jungle growth. Ruth and I found ourselves bringing up the rear. Too many birds were singing and dashing from one side to the other. There were so many birds that we could not take time to look them up in our book, but Ruth jotted down identification marks and colors in a notebook and we found them later in Irby Davis' book *A Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Central America*. Here are a few in-

teresting ones we identified: the beautiful Masked Tityra; several huge Purplish-backed Jays; many Black-headed Saltators; a Golden Woodpecker and the Red-vented Woodpecker.

The students were coming back from the well and we hadn't even reached it yet so we had to hurry. After all we had to remind ourselves that this trip was not a course in ornithology. How we hated to leave this place with so much activity, but we knew the cars would soon be leaving.

Our time was up in Merida, and we left the morning of January 10, crossed the Yucatan Peninsula, and finally arrived in Corozal, British Honduras. Corozal is on the Caribbean Sea and we had two days here. The students went for a swim in the sea and acquired a sun tan and sunburned legs and arms. We slept in thatched roof cottages and it was very warm and humid, even though it was the month of January. Our bungalow had a huge fan in the ceiling that ran all night and helped to keep the bungalow cool and dry. I found the Yellow-throated Warbler wintering here among the coconut palms and banana trees. I even saw one with a band. Comorants were perched on the boat dock and Magnificent Frigatebirds were flying low over the Caribbean.

A Corozal we learned from other tourists that the roads through British Honduras to Belize and on to Guatemala were very rough and difficult to travel. Richard did not want to take a chance of wrecking the college cars so he hired a bus to take us to Flores, Guatemala. The bus was a Toyota and it was called the "Little Jennie." The owner of the bus was a Hindu whose name was Lazzie Hall. He could speak Spanish as well as English. It took us twelve hours to drive 238 miles. Our bus driver pointed out an Ocellated Turkey for Ruth and me. The head and neck is a forget-me-not blue, the wing with a white patch, and the tail gray with spots of blue and bronze. He is about two-thirds as large as the common Wild Turkey.

It was dark when we arrived at 8:00 P.M. at the Hotel International in Flores. We had reservations here and soon after we found our rooms, we found the dining hall. This was a beautiful round building with a marble floor and a thatched roof for ventilation. We ascended the stairs to the dining area above.

When we left Corozal we had left our warm clothes there, as we had been told that Flores would have tropical weather. How wrong that turned out to be! It was only 50 degrees here. San Antonio, Texas, at that time had only 6 degrees above, and the jet stream must have reached Flores, Guatemala. We were the last table to be served and I can still see the steam rising from that hot soup as the waiter placed a bowl at each plate. I do not recall now what kind of soup it was, but no soup ever tasted so good, and it did warm us up for the four courses that followed. This Maya Hoetel was a very interesting place. We stayed in a two story thatched cottage and looking out our window, we could see the beautiful blue water of Lake Peten. Purple Gallinules and Jacanas, two interesting birds that can be seen in the United States, were turning over the lily pads along the shore looking for insects. Many swallows were winging their way over the lake.

The next morning our bus took us to the ruins of Tikal. Dr. Edwin Shook from Antingua, Guatemala, was to be our guide for the next two days. When we were in Vera Cruz, Mexico, at Hotel Macambo, I was talking to a lady professor from the University of Southern Alabama who had just returned from Tikal. She told me how terrible the roads were crossing British Honduras. I remarked, "Oh, that will be disappointing if we can't get to Tikal, for Dr. Edwin Shook is to be our guide."

She looked at me with a puzzled expression and said, "How could you get Dr. Shook to be your guide?"



I replied, "My son will have to answer that one for you." I asked her how soon she would be retiring for the night and she assured me she would stay up all night to meet Richard and find out how he could get the noted archaeologist, Dr. Edwin Shook, to be our guide.

The ancient city of Tikal was thirty miles from Flores. Tikal is now a national park of Guatemala. Dr. Shook, who had come by plane from Antigua, Guatemala, the night before, accompanied us on our bus.

The temples of Tikal stood before us, silent but yet imposing despite the ravages of centuries. Piercing upward above the trees, these great altars had all but been lost in the vastness of the jungles. The Great Plaza had now been cleared of jungle growth. These pyramids with temples at the top had survived to remind the world of ancient splendor. Multitudes of people had once thronged the courts about these pyramid temples to watch ornately dressed priests ascend the steep stairways to dizzy heights above. Perhaps they stood in awe held in suspense by mysterious rites being conducted in the temples above. These were our thoughts on the morning of January 11, 1973, at Tikal "the place where the spirit voices dwell."

Twenty-five of us with our bus driver sat on the steps of the ruins of a temple while Dr. Shook lectured to us and told us many experiences when he was directing the expedition for the restoration of Tikal under a grant from the University of Pennsylvania. The students climbed the temples and took many pictures. Ruth and I played my tape recorder and with the book *The Birds of Tikal* in my hand I was trying to identify birds that came to the edge of the jungle. Many wintering Yellow-rumped Warblers were feeding on the ground and among them we identified the White-collared Seedeaters. Our book gave the seedeaters as a common resident of Tikal. All of a sudden there was a great commotion and many birds flew ahead chased by a hawk. We found the picture of our hawk in the book and he was called a Roadside Hawk, the most common hawk at Tikal.

I turned to the left and there stood a man in a park ranger uniform. He was curious to know what we were doing. I showed him the tape of the Mexican bird songs we were playing and asked him if he knew any of the birds of Tikal. He took the bird book from my hand and turned to Plate 37 and showed me his picture. His name was Jose Marquez and he was an assistant to the author of the book, Frank Smithe. He autographed his picture for me and spoke English very well. He followed us around identifying birds for us.

Finally he had us sit down on the steps of a temple where birds were coming to a small tree with many berries. Many small highly-colored tropical birds flew into this tree, such as the Red-capped and the White-collared Manakins, the Yellow-throated Euphonia, the Olivaceous Woodcreeper and the beautiful Masked Tanager. As we were sitting here, some students appeared and we gave them our binoculars to see the Red-capped Manakin. This very small bird is black with red on his head and nape and upper back. The eyes are white with a yellow tone as the sun shines on them. The students became enthused and I think for the first time began to understand why we were interested in the hobby of bird watching.

There was one bird that I did so much want to see and that was the Yellow-winged Tanager. I had marked this one in the book *The Birds of Guatemala* by Hugh Land. Mr. Marquez exclaimed, "There is your tanager!" Sure enough, the tanager had just flown into the tree and perched on the top branch, a blue tanager with some yellow on his wing. Ruth had seen her motmot; I had seen my Yellow-winged Tanager. Our trip had been a success.

Mr. Marquez said, "I have to go now back to the Plaza, but I'll be back." He would rather be with us identifying birds than talking to the tourists about the

pyramids and temples in the Plaza. He asked me if we were in the party with Dr. Shook, and again I was asked, "How did you get him to be your guide?" When Mr. Marquez had to leave he said, "If you come back again, I'll welcome you with open arms." We had fun telling the rest of the group that we had a famous guide, too. I found out later that Dr. Shook had helped Mr. Marquez to be an assistant to the author of the book, *The Birds of Tikal*.

At noon we all gathered on the steps of the Plaza to eat our lunch that the owner of the Maya Hotel in Flores had sent with us that morning. We had fried chicken and a delicious potato salad that we called Guatemala potato salad because of the special dressing that we had never tasted before. A big box of passion fruit was our dessert and Dr. Shook had to teach us how to eat them.

The next day which was Sunday, January 14, we made another trip from Flores to Tikal. We were fortunate that the temperature was on the cool side as it made it easier to climb the pyramids. Dr. Shook took us in our bus on roads through the jungle where regular tourists are seldom taken. This was quite an experience to ride through these narrow curving roads bordered on both sides with impenetrable jungle. One place we stopped to explore a ruin that had been only partially excavated. While he was lecturing, Ruth and I saw six little spider monkeys swinging from one branch to another. They came closer and closer to us. No doubt they were curious to know who we were. I saw my Yellow-winged Tanager again in the top of a mahogany tree; also the Keel-billed Toucan.



On Monday we left Flores to go back to Corozal, British Honduras. On top of our two story thatched roof cottage sat eight Black Vultures. Wallace remarked that they were waiting to see if any of us did not make it. A pet monkey climbed into our bus to say good-bye; two Scarlet Macaws with wings clipped so they could not fly waddled into the road; two javelina, wild pigs, joined the group; two huge birds, Great Curassows, almost as large as a turkey joined the menagerie. The owner of the hotel had to come to our rescue and clear the way so we could leave.

We bade good-bye to Dr. Shook, who was leaving by plane back to his home in Antigua, Guatemala. In 1952 when our son Richard was working at Iowa State University's Research Station at Antigua, he went on a tour to the ruins of Copan in Honduras, and Dr. Shook was the guide. When he wrote to him and explained his winter term class in anthropology and his final destination to be Tikal. Dr. Shook

said he would be glad to join us. So this is the secret how we had the noted archaeologist for our guide at Tikal. When Ruth and I bade him goody-bye, he invited us to come to Antingua and he would show us the birds there.

Our long strenuous journey home over those 238 miles to Corozal was of interest as it was not daylight and we could see how the people lived in a tropical climate. Their houses had vertical poles cut from trees placed side by side for siding with a thatched roof. The floor was only dirt and they had hammocks for beds. Chickens and turkeys were in the yard where many children were playing. Even pigs roamed the front yard of their home. Everything had little ones and there were always many children either standing in the doorway or playing in the yard. Suzanne, a Japanese student from Hawaii, made this remark to Wallace, "In Mexico and Guatemala everything seems so fertile!"

It is dangerous to drive at night, but there are times when one has to in order to find a place to stay. During the day the natives have their siesta and at night they are out walking the highways, probably going to visit the neighbors or walking into town. Occasionally we'd see someone on a bicycle without any taillights. A burro might be trying to cross the road and often buses were stalled without any lights. So driving at night became very hazardous and slow.

We took a short cut around the city of Belize on the way home and as a result had to cross a river on a ferry. We all piled quickly out of the bus and walked on to the ferry and the bus followed. There was no electricity so the ferry was pulled across the river with only man power.

It was night when we arrived in Corozal to spend one more night in our thatched hut. The cool temperature had reached this Caribbean port and it was much more comfortable than when we left the three days before. Our four cars had been guarded the nights we were gone by a large Negro with a gun and a police dog.

Our trip had been a success. We had reached Tikal, our destination, and the granddaddy of all the ruins. We shall long remember our experiences here; the jungle teeming with birds and spider monkeys; the immense deserted Maya city, much of which is still covered with jungle; the dizzy heights to reach the temples on top; and the beautiful Lake Peten and the Hotel Maya International at Flores.

We had seen a total of 114 birds south of the border; thirty-seven of which were ones that could be seen only south of the border. We were all happy when we crossed the United States border and were back again in the good old U.S.A. After spending 26 days and nights with twenty-one college students, if we were not "Young at Heart" when we started, there was no generation gap when we crossed that border and came back again to a land of snow, ice, and winter.



## Birding Areas of Iowa: Marion County

GLADYS BLACK  
Pleasantville



Knoxville 1970 population: 7,755

Pella 1970 population: 6,668

**History** -- William T. Hornaday and George K. Cherrie grew up in Marion and were noted bird collectors of the late nineteenth century. Hornaday's gift of specimens to the University of Iowa is outstanding but it does not contain Iowa birds. There is a collection of unlabeled eggs of Iowa birds in the Knoxville Historical Museum, a gift from Geo. K. Cherrie. Hornaday, in one of his books, mentioned observing Whooping Cranes only once in this area as a boy.

Thomas J. Barnes, an octogenarian now living in Norwalk, Ia., grew up on the south edge of Marion County near Lovilia. His life was devoted to teaching and he earned his Master's degree in 1915 at Drake University, his thesis being "Common Birds of Iowa." I have found him an invaluable source of information on the population status of Marion County birds in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Introduction** -- The most conspicuous feature of Marion County is the Des Moines River which flows from northwest to southeast and the Red Rock dam, a flood control structure with a permanent pool of 9,000 acres about 9 miles long first filled in March, 1969. The county is open farm land, prairie and gently rolling hills with small streams. Red Rock Reservoir at full storage covers at least 50,000 acres and is some 30 miles long.

**Country Cemeteries** -- Approximately 35 rural cemeteries are scattered throughout the county. Many have mature evergreen trees attractive to wintering owls especially Long-eared and more rarely Short-eared and Saw-whets, also several passerine species. The Swan and Red Rock cemeteries usually have a few Long-ears.

**Farm Ponds** -- At least 1300 ponds on farms attract a few grebes, ducks, shore birds, Soras, coots, herons and many songbirds.

#### **Strip Mine Areas --**

(1). Pella Mine area administered by the State Conservation Commission, located 2 miles S. of Pella, covers 400 A., ponds, grass, saplings attractive to waterfowl and songbirds. Bruce Stiles in 1957 told me that Mockingbird had nested here for many years.

(2). Wilcox Wildlife Preserve, 6 mi. S.W. of Tracy, is owned by the county, and includes 600 A. of ponds, sprouts and Honey Creek. T 17 county road bisects the Preserve from north to south. A few waterfowl during migration and songbirds in summer. Mainly for recreation, motorcycle hill trails, and hunting.

#### **Railroads --**

(1). The CB and Q enters N.W. of Swan and angles SE through the center of the county. Shrikes and Mockingbirds in adjacent fields 1½ miles SE of Pleasantville. Red-tails and Great Horned Owls have nested nearby. Yellowthroats and Bell's Vireos nest in brush along the railroad as well as other songbirds.

(2). The Rock Island enters Marion County S.W. of Pleasantville then angles south through 2 townships and the town of Melcher. There is good birding 3 miles SW of Pleasantville in the vicinity of Coal Creek. Red-tails and Great Horned Owls nest nearby. At least two pair of Yellow-breasted Chats have been observed here for the past 15 summer. Whip-poor-wills, American Redstarts, Yellow Warblers, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are here through the nesting season and many other songbirds.

**City Park --** Big Rock Park is located on the north side of Pella. It is an 83-acre woodland including a prairie area, a shrub area, and a hardwood forest. Trees and wildflowers are identified, good birding year round but especially attractive to vireos, warblers, and tanagers in May.

**County Parks --** Roberts Creek Park and Lake are located along the north side of Lake Red Rock on county road G 28, about 1200 acres. Some fine wooded areas good for warblers in spring and other songbirds. One Red-tailed Hawk nesting there now. Lake used by waterfowl during migration. Camping area in west end of park.

**Pine Groves --**

(1). The one north of G 28, (north perimeter road of Lake Red Rock) usually has several Long-eared Owls near the center and Great Horned Owls along the edges. Pellets may be collected in the areas.

(2). A larger fine grove is located on Dutch Vermeer's farm, 2nd gravel road leading north 1½ miles. Permission to enter has been granted.

(3). Another pine grove is located north of a gravel road along the south side of the Lake off Highway 14. On private property it is fairly inaccessible.

**State Parks --** Elk Rock Park is located on both sides of Lake Red Rock east of Highway 14, and Mile Long Bridge. The mud flats exposed below the bridge (except in flood years 1969 and 1973) carry a large population of shore birds. Twenty species have been observed here including American Avocets each spring and fall and 57 Hudsonian Godwits in May, 1971. This area is also a favorite loafing and feeding spot for migrating waterfowl. Cormorants stop here a few weeks each spring and fall. White Pelicans occasionally loaf and feed here also.

There is one summer Turkey Vulture roost atop Elk Rock Bluff on the south shore. Population varies from 30 to 60 from late March to Oct. 10. They may be observed going to roost in late afternoon by driving into the park at south end of Mile Long Bridge and looking east. Can be seen through binoculars though a spotting scope is better.

Numerous songbirds nest here including a pair of Blue Grosbeaks in 1971, on the north side, also a pair of Woodcock in 1972 and Wood Ducks regularly. Bald Eagles loaf in the trees in spring and fall also an occasional Osprey is seen. A flock of 100 Common Redpolls fed in scattered weed patches in Jan. and Feb. 1972.

Flocks of Broad-winged Hawks sometimes roost in the big trees and form "kettles" the next morning, flying directly over Highway 14, during fall migration. Under a bridge of old Highway 14 just east of Mile Long Bridge 189 pairs of Cliff Swallows nested in 1972. In flood years they nest on the pylons of Mile Long Bridge and on the concrete face of Red Rock Dam.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Land --**

(1). Below Red Rock Dam: The five miles of Des Moines River bottom below Red Rock dam within Marion County has been cleared of most of the timber as farmers anticipated farming every acre with the flood threat removed. However the water table has risen in the area and farm tile cannot handle all the water. Along this area there are occasional banks where Bank Swallows nest. A few Belted Kingfishers fish near the dam with two over-wintering the past 2 years. The area is inadequately policed and one Bald Eagle was shot and killed in Jan. 1972.

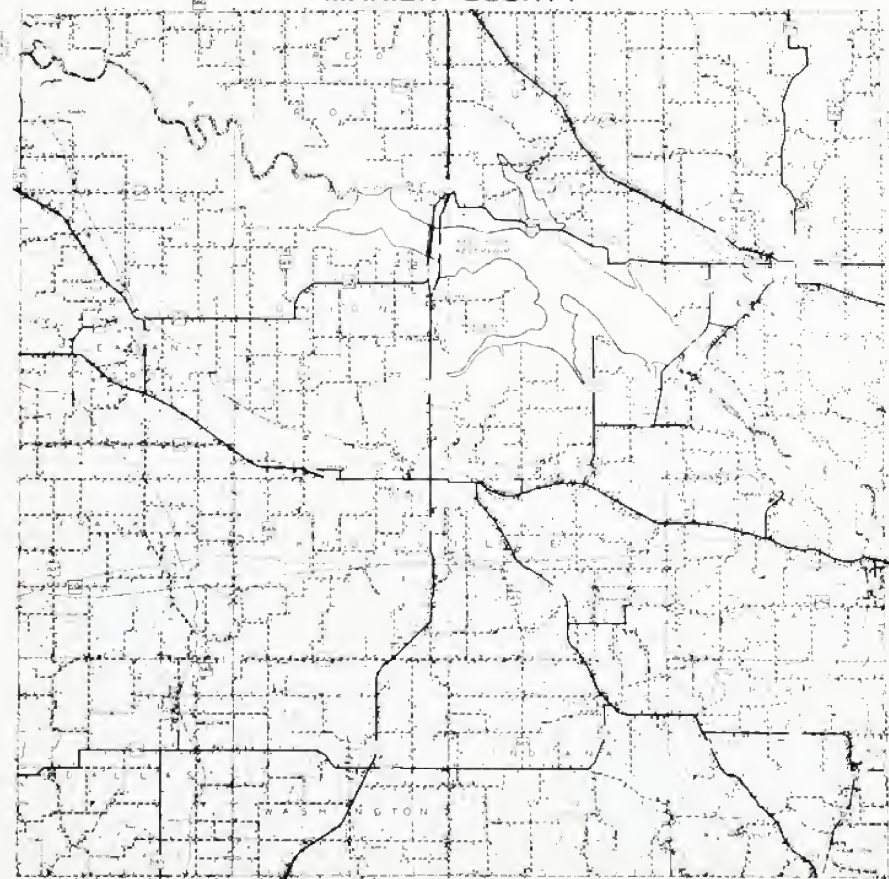


Four to five hundred Mallards and a few other duck species and mergansers overwinter on the 2 mile stretch of open water that never freezes over. A female Old Squaw was seen here on Jan. 2, 1972. Occasionally a small flock of Canada Geese remain all winter - 9 giant Canadas in 1971-72.

The wooded bluffs on the south side of the river immediately below the dam are productive in spring and fall, thrushes, tanagers, vireos, warblers, and other songbirds. Many permanent and winter residents feed at one home atop the bluff, including Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, American Goldfinches, Common Redpolls, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Early spring wild flowers here include hepatica, wild ginger, rue and wood Anemone, blue and yellow violets, Dutchmen breeches, bluebells, blue phlox, bloodroots, etc.

(2). Walla Shuck on the north side of the lake, located south off G 28, (east of Roberts Creek park.) is a camp ground but there are undisturbed woods and underbrush. Red-tails nested here in 1972 and again this year. A pair of Whip-poor-wills are in the west edge of Walla Shuck in ideal habitat. Songbirds also nest in this area.

#### MARION COUNTY





In the spring and fall Bald Eagles and an occasional Osprey perch in trees near the water. Waterfowl may be observed in flight up and down the lake during migration also Herring, Ring-billed and Franklin Gulls and Caspian Terns more rarely.

Red Rock Refuge extends 15 miles northwest of Mile Long Bridge (on Highway 14) beyond the county line into Warren County 2 or 3 miles, approximately 25,000 acres, including all the river bottomland and the bluffs, ranging from 2 to 3 miles in width.

The primary purpose of the Refuge is to attract Canada Geese. Wheat and corn plantings not only attract 35,000 to 45,000 Canada and Lesser Snow Geese but also 250,000 to 500,000 ducks during migration. In flood years, Lesser Scaup number 150,000 and American Coots 100,000. John Beamer, Management Biologist, Pleasantville, is manager of the Refuge. No visitors are allowed within the several thousand acres of the "involute refuge" so check with John first. Altogether 233 bird species have been observed within the Refuge.

Excepting flood years, the bottomland is planted in row crops and small grain by nearby farmers. For 3 miles west of No. 14 the ground is too wet and swampy for crops. In dry years this area carries a population of nesting birds such as Spotted Sandpipers, Sora, Least and American Bitterns and a few Mallards. Wood Ducks nest in bluff trees and bring their ducklings to feed here. Great Blues and Great Egrets feed here. Little Blue Herons were here at least 6 weeks in 1972. One Cattle Egret was seen in 1970. Great Blue Herons nested in trees on the flood plain west of Red Rock Bluff in 1970, 71, and 72. All nestings were failures and analysis of chicks revealed high DDE and dieldrin content. All the nests except 12 are now submerged in the 50 foot deep water and the Herons did not return this spring.

Cliff Swallows nest on Painted Rocks Cliff a mile west of No. 14 on the north side. Cliffs also nest on the pylons of Mile Long Bridge and Runnells Bridge on S35 (west end of the Refuge.)

Two summers roosts of Turkey Vultures are within the Refuge, one at Red Rock Bluff about 2 miles west of No. 14 and north of G 40 and the other about 2 miles west of Refuge headquarters in big trees on the flood plain in dry years and in bluff trees during flood years.

Red-tailed Hawks (and a very few American Kestrels) are the only hawks known to nest in the Refuge. In 1972 a pair of Red-tails successfully reared two young in a heron nest in the midst of 40 pairs of nesting herons. This year they are again feeding young in an old heron nest although the water is 50 feet deep below the nest.

Great Horned, Barred, and Screech Owls, Whip-poor-wills, Common Nighthawks and Am. Woodcock as well as a great number of songbirds nest in the Refuge.

Warblers, thrushes and tanagers are numerous in the bluff trees during migration with 3 pairs of Yellow-breasted Chats remaining through the summer of 1972. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers have been summer residents on two of the bluffs. Ovenbirds favor the bluff woods north of Spurgeon Cemetery off G 26 county road.

## Fall Meeting

MARY LOU PETERSEN

235 McClellan Blvd.

Davenport

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union fall meeting was held on September 22 and 23 at Burlington, Iowa. Field trips in the area were the program for the afternoon on Saturday. The day was exceptionally fine and many interesting birds were sighted.

In the evening from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. a social hour was held in the Burlington Community High School cafeteria. Ms. Jane Fuller, Burlington Bird Club President, welcomed the visitors and announced the field trips for Sunday morning I. O. U. President Darlene Ayres of Ottumwa responded to the welcome and thanked the local committee on their efforts. She then turned the meeting over to Vice-president Richard Crawford of Ames.

Mr. Crawford explained that the man he had planned to have present the program could not attend but would be on our spring meeting program. Richard Crawford then most ably filled in by presenting a program based on his research. Mr. Crawford told the group about his research in aging studies on the American Coot. He suggested that members of the group might get ideas from the program and begin their own studies on some species of their own particular interest. The program was quite informal with questions interspersed throughout. Mr. Crawford's research dealt mainly with leg color and clutch size, age relations, aging in population with an emphasis on drumming up interest in this type of research. His work indicated increased production in birds up to four year of age.

Following Mr. Crawford's presentation, there were slides shown by Mr. Peter Petersen of Davenport and also by the Ayres. Mr. Petersen's slides were a few taken on a trip to Colombia, South America this past summer. The Ayres slides were narrated by his Honor and dealt with some interesting birds captured by the Ayres such as a Hooded Warbler and a very interesting series on raising Monarch butterflies.

Following the slides and before the evening recess, President Ayres announced the May meeting would be held in Ottumwa on May 11 - 12, 1974. Vice-president Crawford discussed briefly the program which is being organized for the spring meeting. The meeting will have topics dealing with birds from many parts of the world.

Sunday, September 23, began with a 5:30 a.m. breakfast at the Burlington Holiday Inn. From the inn, the field trips dispersed to various areas. Sunday was less perfect than the previous day but a good list was tallied.

The noon luncheon was held in the New London Community Center and was served by the ladies of the Eastern Star. Following the luncheon, President Ayres introduced Ms. Fuller and the Burlington Bird Club and called for a round of applause. She called for announcements and Peter Petersen announced that Vice-president Crawford will compile the Christmas Counts. If there are any new counts starting this year, one should write Mr. Crawford for instructions. Dates are from Dec. 15, 1973 to Jan. 1, 1974. President Ayres told the group to encourage people interested in birding to join the I. O. U. She then turned the meeting over to Judge Charles Ayres for the compilation.



**Bird Census - September 23**

Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Great Egret, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Shoveler, Wood Duck, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Osprey, Merlin, American Kestrel, Bob-white, American Coot, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Common Tern, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Common Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Common Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Mockingbird, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Swainson's Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Starling, Red-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Black-and-white Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Parula Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Wilson's Warbler, American Redstart, House Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, American Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Lark, Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow and Song Sparrow. Birds seen on Saturday, September 22, but not on Sunday: Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Canada Warbler, Summer Tanager. Total for both days -- 99 species.

**Registered Attendance**

AMES -- Richard and Glinda Crawford.

BURLINGTON -- Marmie Baker, Ellen, Jane and Lowell Fuller, Elsie Holstein, Anna Mae Lowther, Audrey and Paul Nieman, Jim Settles, and Louise Stempel.

CEDAR FALLS -- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jessen.

CEDAR RAPIDS -- Floy Erickson, Beryl and Patricia Layton, Sara Millikin, Lillian Serbousek, and Myra S. Willis.

DANVILLE -- Jack and Sue McLane.

DAVENPORT -- Peter and Mary Lou Petersen.

DES MOINES -- Woodward H. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Lester W. Haskell, Jeff Kern and Dick Mooney.

IOWA CITY -- Everett and Margaret Alton, Margrieta Delle, and Jim and Karole Fuller.

MEDIAPOLIS -- Dick Helms, Emma Hemphill and Virginia Sharar.

MT. PLEASANT -- Roy and Virginia Ollivier.

OSKALOOSA -- Irene and Keith Layton.

OTTUMWA -- Judge and Mrs. Charles Ayres Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Corzette, Bernard and Florence Fulton, and Harold and Marjorie Haller.

SIOUX CITY -- Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Hanna.

WATERLOO -- John and Lois Osness.

WHEATLAND -- C. Esther Copp and Jeanette Ruprecht.

ILLINOIS, Evanston -- Margaret R. Murley.

56 registered



## Letter from the President

Dear Member of I.O.U.

In accepting the presidency of the I.O.U., I wish to thank all of you for your confidence. It is quite an honor to be chosen for this position and doubly meaningful to me since Charles is a past president. This organization is one which has usually received priority in our spring and fall weekend plans, not so much for the actual birding, but more for the renewal of friendships and the making of new friends at the meetings.

We feel that a real boost will be given to our meetings if each of the 'regulars' will encourage some other members to attend and encourage people who are interested in all facets of the out-of-doors to join the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. However, don't forget to follow up on your "prizes." Help them get acquainted in our fine organization by seeing that they come to meetings and also get involved with local groups.

It was brought to my attention this summer that perhaps the I.O.U. needs to become more active in projects of various kinds related to the goals of our organization. Great! I'm open to suggestions from all sides for we will need specific areas in which to work. Bearing in mind that our treasury just holds its own from year to year, we cannot think in terms yet of extensive monetary contributions to projects; but an increased membership could help in this direction. Other possibilities might include support of legislation in line with our goals -- and I mean active support through letters to members of the legislature and governor plus TV station editorials and newspaper articles. The possibilities are endless. Yes, we are all busy, but strangely enough we usually find time for things we really want to do. Drop me a note if you have any ideas and we'll get some action under way.

Three goals then I've set for the year: increase our membership, encourage attendance at our meetings, and set up some projects. Let's work together to make a great organization even greater.

Charles and I are pleased to announce that the Ottumwa Bird Club has issued an invitation to the I.O.U. for the 1974 spring meeting in May. Ideas are being formulated already and our club is looking forward to welcoming a record group. The dates are May 11-12, 1974. We would also like to have the 1974 fall meeting and the 1975 spring meeting places planned in advance, so please be considering extending us an invitation in the near future.

But the time you receive this **IBL**, fall birding will have been in full swing for several weeks and the White-throated Sparrows should be prowling through your yards. Charles joins me in extending best wishes for the best fall and winter birding ever.

Most sincerely,  
Mrs. Charles C. Ayres, Jr.

# Birds on Stamps

JOSEPH BROWN

10414 Applegate

San Antonio, Texas

Although national interest in the environment and in natural history has never seemed more intense, Iowa's bird clubs have had to work hard to maintain membership, let alone attract new members.

The nature of our birding hobby makes it attractive to youthful enthusiasts, as well as to those more mature. A look at a meeting of a flourishing bird club should convince anyone that the generation gap there is very, very slight.

In Des Moines, many of our young people were given an interest in ornithology through the efforts of a dedicated fourth grade teacher, Miss Irene Smith, and we would like to suggest a way that others might themselves now create this kind of interest.

Parents reading this will know that if there is anything that their elementary school children like to do it is to collect things: rocks, baseball cards, toy cars, stamps, you name it. Of these, stamps have the virtue of being widely available, and in most cases, are free (used), or at least very inexpensive.

Many stamps of the world utilize pictures or designs which feature birds, and so a nice symbiosis of sorts can exist for the collector. Turn a kid on to bird stamps and you have the nucleus of a junior division of your local bird club - one more person to be interested in the joys of the outdoors now and in the future.

A few easy-to-find bird stamps are pictured here; all are U. S. issues, and all are at the present time available at a cost of ten cents or less apiece.

An adult birder can also enjoy these colorful designs which can be assembled and framed to form a display of mini bird prints, a nice addition to a collection of ornithological books or pictures.

Identification of stamps (left to right; top to bottom)

Alabama Statehood commemorative, 1969; Camellia and Common Flicker.

Waterfowl conservation commemorative, 1968; Wood Duck.

Wildlife conservation, 1971: California Condor (endangered species).

Christmas issue, 1971: Chukar Partridge.

Wildlife conservation, 1957: Whooping Cranes with chicks.

Register and Vote commemorative, 1968: Bald Eagle (from a San Francisco weathervane).

Audubon, American artist, commemorative, 1963: "Columbia Jay" (Collie's Magpie-Jay).

Natural history commemorative, 1970: Bald Eagle.

Migratory Bird Treaty, 50th anniversary, 1966: Canada Goose (symbolic).

Not pictured is the jumbo stamp featuring the Cardinal (part of four wildlife conservation commemoratives issued in 1972).





## FIELD REPORTS



The spring migration notes were rather incomplete as the migration was rather late for some species, particularly the waders. As a consequence, the reports which ordinarily are confined to nesting season contain references to some spring migratory movements. Some notes on early fall migrations are also included. May was wet and slightly cooler than normal, June was warm with less than average moisture, and July with normal temperatures had very heavy rains bringing the excess rainfall for the year at the Des Moines Airport to 10.5 inches. August was hot and dry with no rain in the first three weeks. September has been cool thus far with scattered rains.

**Loons, Grebes, Pelicans, Cormorants.** A Common Loon was still present on 17 June (RM). An Eared Grebe was on E. Twin L. on 26 June (RM). A Western Grebe was seen on Big Wall L. on 26 June (RM,MEW). Very many young Pied-billed Grebes have been seen (DH). White Pelicans reported were 8 on 15-17 May (WC) and 29 on Anderson L. on 20 May (RM). Double-crested Cormorants were 8 on 17 May (WC) and 6 on 9 September (GB).

**Hérons.** Great Blue Herons failed to nest at Red Rock due to the depth of the water under the old heronry, but 85 were seen on 6 September (GB). They were "easy to find" (NH) and 27 were seen in dead trees at Coralville on 14 August (FK). There were more than usual (EG,RP). There were 70 nests counted at Rathbun Lake, but a windstorm destroyed a number. It was thought there would be 30-40 young fledged (PE). On 30 June there were 2 immature and on 12 July 3 immature and 2 adult Little Blue Herons (WC). Cattle Egrets were seen on 17 May (WC), 11 June at Ely (LS), and 4 on 5 September (DG). From 1 to 11 Great Egrets were seen during the summer (WC), with 70 on 15 September and 79 on the 16th (GB,WC). Adult Yellow-crowned Night Herons were noted on 30 June and 12 July, and 1 adult and 1 immature on 1 September (WC).

**Geese, Ducks.** Canada Geese were seen: 2 on 21 May near Sandyville, 3 on 31 May near Pleasantville, and 4 at Avon on 9-10 July, all on the Red Rock flood pool (WC); and 7 at Credit Island 25 July, 5 of them the "Giant" race (PP). A Mallard was found incubating in an old Red-tailed Hawk's nest (GB). Gadwall were seen on 3 June (MEP). Pintails seen on 26 June were early (WC). The nesting reported in southwest Iowa is much farther south than other reported nestings (RP). Green-winged Teal were seen on the early dates 30 June and 1 July (WC). American Wigeon was observed on 3 June (MEP). Wood Ducks appear to have a good nesting season with numerous young observed. A Redhead female with young was seen in the Forney Lake area (Don Priebe, fide RP).

**Vultures, Hawks.** Three large roosts of non-breeding Turkey Vultures were occupied in the Red Rock area (GB). There were 13 pairs of Red-tailed Hawks in the area. Of 5 nests (one in an old heron nest) 3 produced 7 young, 5 of which were banded by Dean Roosa (GB). Broad-wings totaling at least 100 each day were seen at Davenport on 2, 11 and 18 September (PP). Red-tailed were few (FK). Two Ospreys seen near Toolesboro 22 September (PP). A Peregrine was well seen on 15 and 16 September (GB,WC). There were no Kestrels in the former old sites (GB) and none (FK), with few seen in the Des Moines area.

**Pheasants, Partridges, Turkeys.** Partridges had a good nesting season, and Pheasants also due to low rainfall (EJB). Turkeys were nesting in Yellow River Forest on 31 May, and 1 was sighted at Effigy Mounds on 1 August (LS).

**Shorebirds.** Most reports of waders refer to observations on the Red Rock flood waters, either near Des Moines or Pleasantville. Piping Plover were again found nesting at DeSoto Bend on 6 June (RM,WHB) and one was seen on 17 May (WC). Semipalmated Plover were frequently seen (WC), with some in early September and a flock of 50 on 1 August (NH). Both Golden and Black-bellied Plovers were seen more often than in most years and some were in summer plumage in September (LS,RM,GB,WC). Ruddy Turnstones were observed 19 and 22 May (WC) and on 9 September (GB,WC). A Whimbrel was seen on 22 May (WC), and a flock of 15 on the following day (MB,WHB). The only Upland Sandpiper was photographed by Herb Dorow (GB). Willets were seen in May and July (WC), in early and late August and mid-September (NH) and 3 on 31 August (LS). While only one or two Pectorals were seen in the spring, by August they were most abundant (NH,WHB). Dunlins and Dowitchers were at Coralville (NH), as well as Des Moines. Three Short-billed Dowitchers were at Credit Island 16 July with one still present 25 July (PP). Stilt Sandpipers were unusually abundant in both Des Moines and Coralville. Western Sandpipers were seen three times in May and September (GB,WC), and on 9 and 12 August (NH). The rare Buff-breasted Sandpiper was seen by many observers during August and September in several areas near Des Moines and near Pleasantville. On 19 August a flock of 20-25 Marbled Godwits were at Blue Lake (DH). Both Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits were near Des Moines on 20 April, the latter were seen on several May dates (WC). Sanderlings were seen on five dates (NH), and on several occasions near Des Moines. An American Avocet was observed on 6 July (WC,RM). Northern Phalaropes were seen in May (WC) and on 8 September (WC,GB).

**Gulls, Terns.** Herring Gulls on 22 May and 26 July were unusual (WC). Franklin's Gulls were seen on 27 June (DK), and 28 June and 1 July (WC). Bonaparte's Gulls migrating on 23 August were rarely (EG). Least Terns again nested at DeSoto Bend (RM,WHB). Caspian Tern observations were on 9 and 11 July (WC), by several observers on 9 and 11 September and 2 at Lock 16, Muscatine on 22 September (PP).

**Cuckoos, Owls.** Cuckoos were thought rare (GB), but Yellow-billed were present most of the summer with lots of caterpillars, there were some Black-billed in early June (NH). Both nests of the Great Horned Owl failed (GB).

**Goatsuckers, Swifts, Hummingbirds.** A recording was made by a Chuck-will's-widow heard almost nightly from early May to 4 July in a yard in Cedar Rapids (LS). Flocks of migrating Common Nighthawks were noted on 4 September (RH) and in the middle two weeks of September (DH,JK,FK,PP). Chimney Swifts are declining each year (GB). No hummingbird was seen all summer (EG).

**Flycatchers, Swallow.** Eastern Kingbirds were abundant (RP), but Western Kingbirds were scarcer (RP,EG). A record late date for the species was 18 September (WC). A nesting was found (DM). Eastern Phoebe were scarce with heavy rains having destroyed nests (GB). A good movement of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers was noted the first week of September with 8 netted on 4 September (PP). Three singing Least Flycatchers were found in Yellow River Forest 7 and 8 July (DK), and one was at Davenport 22 July (PP). Say's Phoebe failed to nest in the area (EB). Purple Martins were fewer this fall (DH) and colonies were smaller with some houses unoccupied (GB).



**Jays, Magpies, Titmice, Creepers, Wrens.** Blue Jays were gathering as early as August (EG). On 19 May 2 Black-billed Magpies were seen between Cedar Rapids and Mt. Vernon (Dr. EMB). Titmice were seen only twice all spring (RM) and are noticeably fewer around Des Moines. A very early Brown Creeper was seen on 20 August (DH) and another on 23 September was earlier than usual (JK). House Wrens were not abundant (GB). Carolina Wrens were seen 7 and 27 July (FK) and a pair nested (GB).

**Mimics, Thrushes.** The two Mockingbird nests were failures with cats as a possible explanation (GB). An observation at Gladbrook was on 8 May (EE). Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers were fewer (DH). Opinions regarding the American Robin ranged from "no large flocks as usual" (GB), to "very successful season" (DH). There was a strong flight of Veeries at Davenport on 5 September with 12 netted (PP). No Eastern Bluebirds were reported (DH).

**Kinglets, Shrikes.** A Ruby-crowned Kinglet on 25 August was early (RH). Loggered Shrikes were either not seen (FK) or very scarce, but three pairs fledged 5 young each (GB).

**Vireos, Warblers.** White-eyed Vireos were seen at the Ledges on 22 May (MEW, MB), and 2 June in Walnut Woods (DM, MEW, RM). Red-eyed, seen in fewer numbers for several years, seemed to have increased in Des Moines. A Philadelphia Vireo was identified on 19 May (LS). Very few warblers had been seen up to the dates of submission of the reports received. The best wave of September occurred 5 and 6 September at Davenport, and three Black-throated Blues were netted 10 and 11 September (PP).

**Icterids, Tanagers, Finches.** A rather late date for Bobolink was 24 August (NH). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported nesting south of Sioux City (DH), and observed (LS, EA). One pair of Orchard Orioles nested (GB) and they were seen in the yard as usual (NH). There were at least three pairs of Scarlet Tanagers in the area (GB). Summer Tanagers were seen infrequently early in the season in Des Moines and no evidence of nesting. A flock of 25 or more Rose-breasted Grosbeaks was seen on 17 September (JK). There were 21 Blue Grosbeaks seen on 3 breeding-bird surveys in northwest Iowa (RM), but not many in the Shenandoah area (RP). Indigo Bunting were fewer (M. Spears, fide RP). A Lazuli Bunting was seen on 24 May (DH). Dickcissels were abundant (GB, RM, RP). Pine Siskins were seen carrying nesting material in May, and what appeared to be a male feeding a female was observed on 22 June (HP). They evidently nested in Sioux City as young were seen from 17 to 29 June (DH). Rufous-sided Towhees again very scarce in Polk Co. (WHB). Field Sparrows were fewer (DH).

There have been some freakish nesting situations reported: Red-tails in an old Great Blue Heron nest, Mallard in Red-tailed Hawk nest high in an oak, Great Horned Owl in an old Crow's nest and one in a hay mow, Carolina Wrens in a garage, Great Crested Flycatcher in a Bluebird box, and Bluebirds in a pail hanging under a gasoline tank, Titmice in a Bluebird box, Dove using an old Robin's nest.

**Contributors:** Gene Armstrong, Booneville; Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Dr. E. M. Brackney, Minneapolis; Margaret Brooke, Des Moines; Eldon Bryant, Akron; Wm. Criswell, Des Moines; Mrs. E. Ehlers, Reinbeck; Pearl Evans, Russell; Mrs. E. A. Getscher, Hamburg; Donald Gillaspey, Lamoni; Dr. N. Halmi, Iowa City; Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Sioux City; Russell Hays, Waterloo; Joe Kennedy, Des Moines; Pearl Knopp, Marble Rock; Darwin Koenig, Castalia; Fred Kent, Iowa City; Richard Mooney, Des Moines; Dean Moseman, Ankeny; Ron Muilenburg, Webster City; Helen Peasley, Des Moines; Mary Elizabeth Peck, Des



Moines; Peter Petersen, Davenport; Ruth Phipps, Shenandoah; Lillian Serbousek, Cedar Rapids; Mary Ellen Wartens, Des Moines. Woodward H. Brown, 432 Tonawanda Dr., Des Moines, 50312.

Notes for publication in the December issue should be submitted by 20 November.

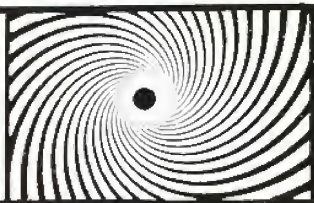
## GENERAL NOTES



**Shorebirds at Des Moines** -- Waders were found in unprecedented numbers in late spring and early summer in the Red Rock flood pool which backed up to within a very few miles of the city. By dint of wading out in deep mud during almost daily visits to the area, Bill Criswell of Des Moines turned up every species in the plover and sandpiper groups in the Iowa checklist with the exception of Woodcock and Western Sandpiper. In addition, Knots were found on 22 May, and Cattle Egrets on 17 May. Some of the rarer species found in the area were: Whimbrel on 21 and 23 May, Black Duck on 30 June and 11 July, Cinnamon Teal on 3 and 4 July, Buff-breasted Sandpiper from 3 to 27 August, and Marbled Godwit on 26 April. As word got around, practically all of these species were seen by numerous observers. While the numbers of both species and individuals were extraordinary, another aspect of these observations is noteworthy. Many shorebirds on their way north are last seen here from late May to early June, and begin to reappear in early or mid-July. This year we had Solitary Sandpiper on 30 June, Willet on 3 July, Lesser Yellow-legs from 26 June to 1 July, Least Sandpiper on 3 July, and American Avocet on 6 July. American Golden Plovers were seen as late as 28 June and as early as 3 August, and Black-bellied Plovers on the unusual dates 26 and 27 June.

This fortunate (for birders) situation was due to the unusually heavy spring and summer rainfall which, by the end of July, exceeded the Des Moines normal year-to-date total by 10.5 inches. Much of the Red Rock flood pool would have been impounded north of Des Moines had the Saylorville Dam been operative, and the completion of this dam together with the improbability of rainfall comparable to this year's make a similar shorebird invasion unlikely. -- WOODWARD H. BROWN, 432 Tonawanda Dr., Des Moines.

## OBITUARIES



Mrs. Margret L. Jones -- 69, of Russellville, Ark., and formerly of Waterloo, died Saturday, Aug. 4, 1973, at 8 p.m. of a heart condition there. Services were held at 11 a.m. August 8 at Parrot & Wood Funeral Home, Waterloo. Graveside services were held at Bailey Cemetery in Keswick.

She was born in Savanna, Ill., on Nov. 14, 1903, the daughter of Louie and Margret Hunt Metcalf. On Aug. 23, 1928, she was married to Myrle L. Jones in Waterloo. Mrs. Jones was a teacher in Toledo, Bellevue, and Russellville, Ark. She was a member of the Iowa Ornithologists Union since 1941. She was also a member of the Methodist Church.

Surviving are two sons, Loren of Burney, Calif., and Charles of Crossitt, Ark.; one daughter, Mrs. James May of Norwalk; three sisters, Mrs. L. B. Pollock of 450 Florence St.; Miss Mildred Metcalf of Des Moines, and Mrs. Elva Kinsell of Los Angeles, Calif.; one brother, Harry of St. Paul, Minn.; and nine grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband and parents. -- Contributed by FRED PIERCE, Winthrop.

## BOOK REVIEWS



Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia Volumes 7, 8, Birds I & II -- h. c. Bernhard Grzimek, Editor-in-Chief -- Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., New York -- 579 and 620 p., many color plates and range maps in each volume -- 1972 -- \$29.95 each volume.

These two volumes are among the first published of what will be a thirteen volume set covering the animal kingdom. It will be the most comprehensive and well illustrated work of this type yet produced. The treatment is organized in the order of classification with the first volume covering all orders through falconiforms plus Chachalacas, Curassows, Guans, Quail and Grouse, Volume two continues with the remaining galliforms through Hummingbirds, Trogons and Mousebirds. The first chapter of volume one discusses birds generally and recaps primitive forms. All the chapters dealing with specific orders or groups of families are written by various ornithologists who are specialists in the area. These accounts are presented in a fairly uniform manner covering distinguishing characteristics, range, habits, food, voice and nesting cycle plus color plates. Not

all species are covered, but the authors use some species to illustrate the general life history details for the group. Headings in the margin make the location of information much easier. The color illustration is the work of many artists and is well reproduced. They aid in providing good background on the birds covered in the text and sometimes serve to provide an illustration of a bird not available elsewhere. At the back of each volume is a systematic classification of the species covered in the book with page reference to the text. The choice of common names does not always agree with the currently accepted usage, but this point is always very debateable. The books also include an animal dictionary providing English, German, French and Russian names for the birds included. This is presented four times, being alphabetized for each language. It is unfortunate that the commonest language in the new world, Spanish, was omitted. A list of supplementary readings and a complete index round out each volume.

These books are fine general reference works. The quality of printing and binding is very good. Public libraries should have the entire set. College and public school libraries would do well to consider purchase of the set. Serious students of ornithology who want to have good reference sources in their own libraries should also consider purchase of the three volumes devoted to birds. The publication of the third volume on birds is awaited with interest, as it will cover more species than the first two combined. ed.

**The World's Vanishing Birds** -- Cyril Littlewood and D. W. Oviden -- Arco Publishing Co., New York -- 63 p; 23 color plates, 23 maps, 1972 -- \$5.95.

A well produced effort to provide sympathy for some of the endangered birds of the world. Although it is a thin book and treats only sixty species, the format is good as are the illustrations. The birds are covered by continent, enabling readers to easily locate birds in their geographic area. One of the main problems with the book is the varying degree to which the birds covered are "endangered". Of one dove from Ethiopia the authors themselves admit "this little known species is not really endangered or particularly rare". Others are listed although admittedly so little is known of them that their status is really more correctly unstudied. Another major problem is the listing of both species and subspecies with no distinction between them. Aside from these rather general complaints many smaller ones arise. The Trumpeter Swan is now felt safe and on the increase but it is included. The Southern Bald Eagle is listed with the Latin name of the entire species. The text on this bird discusses it partly based on the entire species and partly on the southern race. Probably those familiar with species from elsewhere in the world could note other errors. Finally, not one species from continental South America is included and with the rapid destruction of habitat occurring there coupled with the vast number of species present it probably has more endangered species than the rest of the world combined. With so many inconsistencies this book has little to recommend it. ed.

**The Passenger Pigeon, Its Natural History and Extinction** -- A. W. Schroger -- University of Oklahoma Press, Norman -- 424 p; 22 figures, 5 tables -- 1973 -- \$9.95.

A reprint of the 1955 edition of a very fine history of a bird which was probably the commonest bird in America before white settlement (see IBL Vol. 24 p. 22-23). This new edition, only a couple of dollars more expensive than the first edition, makes the book again available to the current generation of bird watchers. Most birders probably are familiar with the rapid decimation of this bird, which in a period of about 25 years went from a population of three to five billion to mere



remnants. Schroger covered 2200 references during the preparation of this book. He covers life history information, commercial exploitation, distribution, anatomy and physiology. He also has the ability to put this gold mine of information into a form that reads as absorbingly as many novels. This book should be in all public and college libraries. ed.

**A Study of Bird Song** -- Edward A. Armstrong -- Dover Publications, New York -- 343 p., 25 photographs, 43 figures -- 1973 -- \$4.00, paperbacked.

Another reprint, this one of a book first published in 1963. It includes a seven page addenda covering research which has come to light in the last ten years. Writing with the serious student in mind the author covers many types of calls, songs and non-vocal sounds. He delves into bird utterances as language, the structure and components of bird song, the development and learning of songs, the relationship of vocalization to speciation, flight songs, female songs, duets and corporate songs. He considers environmental aspects of the development of song such as the influence of light, weather, and temperature, adaptation to habitat and the annual cycle and bird song as art and play. The list of references is quite complete. It is a must for anyone deeply interested in any aspect of bird song. ed.

**The World of the Wood Duck** -- F. Eugene Hester and Jack Dermid -- J. B. Lippincott and Co., Philadelphia -- 160p., 81 photographs and three line drawings -- 1973 -- \$5.95.

Another, along with the next two books reviewed here, in the Living World Series from Lippincott. An earlier book in the series reviewed in this journal was the **World of the Great Horned Owl**, (see IBL Vol. 36 p. 61). This book covers the seasonal life history cycle, relationship with man, ways of building nest boxes, classification and range. The text is not excessively detailed but does provide the basic information on the bird the average nature-oriented person would find most salient. Mention is made of the studies of Frederic Leopold of Burlington which he presented at our Waterloo meeting last year. ed.

**The World of the Ruffed Grouse** -- Leonard Lee Rue -- J. B. Lippincott and Co., Philadelphia -- 160 p., 86 photographs -- 1973 -- \$5.95.

This book has the same format as the preceding one. The coverage is similar, with seasonal life history cycle, relationship with man and classification covered. The Ruffed Grouse is considered the top game bird by many and we have a small population in northeast Iowa. The treatment is again primarily non-technical and very well written, as in the other volumes of this series. ed.

**The World of the Wild Turkey** -- James C. Lewis -- J. B. Lippincott and Co., Philadelphia -- 158 p., 85 photographs -- 1973 -- \$5.95.

Again, the same format and coverage with the addition of a section of the future of the Wild Turkey. The author is a turkey specialist of many years experience. This Living World series is especially fine as reference work for young people with the abundance of photographs and should be in college and high school libraries in particular. ed.

**Finding Birds in Trinidad and Tobago** -- Donald S. Heintzelman -- Published by the author, 629 Green St., Allentown, Pa., 32 p., four maps -- 1973 -- \$3.00 - paper-bound.

A very well written booklet which would prove extremely useful to any birder planning a trip to Trinidad and Tobago. The author describes the islands briefly and suggests the best seasons for birding. From personal experience I would extend the good period until early June. Field equipment is suggested, to which I

would add a spotting scope and gunstock and **The Birds of Surinam**, a large book but one with illustrations of many Trinidad species. It may not be as necessary to have the Surinam book when French's book is published. The birding locations are well described. The price is high, but if you plan a visit to this area it is well worth it. ed.

**A Birder's Guide to Denver and Eastern Colorado** -- James A. Lane and Harold R. Holt -- L. and P. Photography, Box 19401, Denver -- 136 p., many maps, migration chart -- 1973 -- \$3.00 -- paperback.

A book written for the avid birder intent on seeing new birds in the Denver area. Much of the book deals with various specific birding trips which include the best stops for the typical birds of the various habitats. The seasons for the target species are also given. For birders who are in search of only a few species another section is arranged by species and tells one the best place to observe them. Another section is a migration chart, this one with the abundance stated in "birding" terms, hard to miss, should see, may see, lucky to find, how lucky can you get and irregular. The status assumes the right habitat of course. The final section covers other vertebrates of the area, listing species and their habitats. Useful references and an index complete the book. Everything considered, this is as absolute must for the hard core birder heading for the Denver area. ed.

**A Birder's Guide to the Texas Coast** -- James A. Lane -- L. and P. Photography, Box 19401, Denver -- 108 p. many maps, migration chart -- 1973 -- \$3.00 -- paperbound.

Another guide with a format like the book covered in the preceding review. The book takes the birder down the coast from the edge of Louisiana to the Mexican border. It has been some time since this reviewer has had the opportunity to bird this area, but as with the previous book all material seems quite accurate and very objective. The author does not promise an Eskimo Curlew or the casual visitors, but gives you the location of the best birding areas, when to go there and your chances of finding various birds in the area. ed.

**Wilderness Packet n' Pak Library** -- Dennis Bleything, Calvin Burt, Ron Dawson and Frank Heyl -- Life Support Technology, Inc., Manning, Oregon -- five 64 page booklets with many line drawings -- 1969-1972 -- \$4.95 per set, paperbound, or \$1.00 each.

An interesting concept consisting of five small (3½ x 4½) booklets and a plastic folder containing essential information for wilderness survival. The booklets deal with survival, edible plants (2 volumes), poisonous plants and medical aid in the wilderness. For example the survival booklet covers medicine, hygiene and first aid for remote areas, suggestions relating to snow blindness, frostbite, snake bites, fire starting, water, temperature-windchill chart, shelters, food, signaling, snares, fishing, knots, travel, compass and snowshoes. As would be expected in the small, compact format the information is brief and to the point. The set fits easily into a pocket and could provide life saving information on a trip into extremely remote country. ed.

**Cranes of the World** -- Lawrence Walkinshaw -- Winchester Press, New York, New York -- 370 p., 128 black and white photographs plus 10 in color -- 1973 -- \$25.00.

The long delayed work on cranes is finally in print and overlooking a few small omissions, is well worth the wait. Authored by Dr. Lawrence Walkinshaw, a retired dentist from Battle Creek, Michigan, it shows that professional ornithologists are not the only people capable of producing a definitive work. The book covers all fifteen species of cranes, with the length of the species accounts



varying based on the literature available for each. The longest account is the 66 pages devoted to the Sandhill Crane, the shortest to seven pages for the Black-necked Crane, the only species not seen by the author. Each species account includes common names in many languages, a complete description for all plumages, measurements and distribution. The breeding cycle is described in detail for the species for which it is known. Considerable detailed life history information is included for several species. Miscellaneous data such as survival tables, growth tables and counts appear at the end of the book. The bibliography is separated by species, greatly facilitating its use. The bibliography indicates the book includes references through 1968. A little checking showed the omission of a 1964 Whooping Crane record for Iowa which appeared in *Iowa Bird Life* and the spotty use of *Birds of the Soviet Union*, Dementiev and Gladkov, 1951, some species records used, others ignored.

This book is expensive but provides a complete reference for this subfamily. It is well illustrated and written in an absorbing style unusual in monographs of bird groups. College libraries should certainly have a copy available for their students, and the serious birder will want to consider its purchase. ed.

**Birds of Big Bend National Park and Vicinity** -- Roland H. Wauer -- University of Texas Press, Austin -- 223 p., 8 color plates, 17 photographs and one map -- 1973 -- paperbound, \$4.95.

A very well done guide for birding in and around Big Bend National Park. The park boasts the largest bird list of any national park, 385 species. The reasons for the large list of birds are the diversity of habitat and geographic location at the crossroads of many ranges. The book is composed of a background of the geography of the area, a brief history of ornithological field work, a complete section on bird finding and annotated list of the birds. The plates illustrate some of the most typical species of the major habitat areas of the park. The book should be used in combination with a field guide as it does not attempt to duplicate identification information already available in several guides. The annotated list gives the status, habitat preference and period of occurrence for the species recorded for the park.

This type of book should be available for more of our national parks. It would be indispensable for anyone planning to bird in the park or nearby. ed.

**Birds and Colleges** -- Jim McCloy, 402 Rosewood Drive, Pilgrim Gardens, Newark, Delaware 19711.

Each of the thousands of colleges and universities in the country has a nickname. Many of these are animals, and birds are no exception. See how many of the following schools you are able to match with the proper nickname in this short quiz.

- |                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Youngstown University     | A. Owls          |
| 2. Tennessee Tech            | B. Falcons       |
| 3. Wesleyan University       | C. Penguins      |
| 4. Air Force Academy         | D. Ravens        |
| 5. St. Joseph's College      | E. Golden Eagles |
| 6. Temple University         | F. Blue Jays     |
| 7. University of Kansas      | G. Redbirds      |
| 8. Illinois State University | H. Cardinals     |
| 9. Elizabethtown College     | I. Hawks         |
| 10. Franklin Pierce College  | J. Jayhawks      |

Answers: 1-C; 2-E; 3-H; 4-B; 5-I; 6-A; 7-J; 8-G; 9-F; 10-D.



## North American Hawk Migration Conference

Valuable research on hawk migration has been done by many individuals and organizations over the past 40 years, but little work has so far been done to correlate these studies. The purpose of the North American Hawk Migration Conference, therefore, is to gather under one roof hawkwatchers from all over eastern North America -- from the edge of the Great Plains at longitude 95 degrees east to the Atlantic coast, and from Manitoba to the Gulf of Mexico -- to exchange observations on hawk migration, to set standards for record-keeping, and to agree on ways of sharing and collating information on a continuing basis.

The conference will be held at a Holiday Inn north of Syracuse, which is easily reached by interstate highways and is also served by trains, buses, and airlines. Registration will begin the evening of Thursday, April 18; the program will begin the next day and end late Sunday. Conferees who stay at the Holiday Inn can expect to pay about \$15-\$20 a night per room, plus \$3-\$6 a meal. The Onondage Audubon Society has formed the host committee for the conference, and the host committee chairman, Dorothy W. Crumb, will be able to answer any questions you may have about transportation and accommodations (her address is 3983 Gates Road North, Jamesville, N. Y. 13078).

The working list of subjects to be covered includes:

The mechanics of bird-of-prey migration -- what gets them started, what points them in the direction they take -- and unanswered questions about this.

Major weather patterns and their effects on migration (including a meteorologist's discussion of weather patterns) and more unanswered questions.

Local weather conditions that are subject to rapid change, and local topography, and the effects of both on migration routes; unanswered questions here, too.

Problems of bird-of-prey identifications; if the weather is right, this may include a trip to nearby Derby Hill of the southwestern edge of Lake Ontario -- a first-rate spring hawkwatch.

The limits of sight: how far away can birds be seen with the naked eye, and how greatly is this range extended by binoculars and telescopes?

The use of radar in counting and tracking birds of prey.

Trapping and banding migrating birds of prey.

Possibilities and techniques for discovering where the birds of prey are coming from: where are they breeding?

Finding and opening new lookouts; proselytising and training new hawkwatchers.

Developing new kinds of data on migration behavior by keeping records of more than the count of passing hawks.

Setting standards for the record-keeping, and exchanging information regularly.

We do hope that you will attend the conference and that you will encourage other hawkwatchers to join us -- ROBERT ARBIB, National Audubon Society, New York, New York.

## Does Your Interest In Birds Go Deeper?

If you have developed an interest in bird study which goes past the level of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union you may wish to consider joining a national ornithological society. The Wilson Ornithological Society is an organization of the theoretical and practical biologists and field ornithologists. The society publishes the *Wilson Bulletin*, a quarterly journal of over 100 pages per issue and promotes an annual meeting of its members. Members also have full use of the Josselyn Van Tyne Memorial Library at Ann Arbor, Michigan, with the books being mailed to the member at his home on loan. They are also eligible for the annual Fuertes Research Grant and other grants to help them pursue their field work. Dues in the society are \$8.00 per year. Anyone interested should contact the editor for a folder describing the society in greater detail. ed.

## Christmas Bird Count - 1973

This year the Christmas Bird Count will be compiled by Richard Crawford. Forms will be sent to those who compiled counts last year in this magazine. Anyone wishing to establish a new count should write to Rich. Dates for the count are Dec. 15, 1973 to Jan. 1, 1974.

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Peter C. Petersen, Editor

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.